

# Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge

May 5 – May 17, 2014 [Issue 1]

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## Photo of the Week



Photo Credit: USFWS/Keenan Yakola

## A Message from Monomoy

We're back! After a long and chilly Cape winter, spring has finally returned to Monomoy NWR, along with some of our favorite nesting birds! On May 12, 2014 we held our annual staff orientation, and welcomed back returning staff, Claire Revekant and Yianni Laskaris. We'd also like to give a warm welcome to our new staff this season: Kaiti Titherington, Cooper Crose, Coleman O'Brien, Kimberly Spiller, Joe Samela, Taylor Noble, and Becca Mattson.

Intense nest searching for the past couple weeks has proven fruitful, as staff has noted several American oystercatcher and piping plover nests on the refuge, discussed in detail on page 2. As for our infamous tern colony, common and roseate terns are slowly but surely making their way back from their long migration trip.

Camp setup is already underway in preparation of the returning common and roseate terns. The tern crew should be settled into their new home within next week or so.

## 2014 Field Season Update

This is a weekly synopsis of biological activities on South Monomoy, North Monomoy, and Minimoy Islands. Information within this report is subject to change. For up to date information, please contact Refuge Staff.

## Bird Sightings

Double-crested cormorant  
Great black-backed gull  
Herring gull  
Ring-billed gull  
Glaucous gull  
Iceland gull  
Laughing gull  
Willet  
Greater yellowlegs  
Lesser yellowlegs  
Black-crowned night heron  
American bittern  
Barn swallow  
White-rumped sandpiper  
Least sandpiper  
Short-billed dowitcher  
Black tern

Black-bellied plover  
Semipalmated plover  
Semipalmated sandpiper  
Sanderling  
Dunlin  
Snowy owl  
Great egret  
White-throated sparrow  
Turkey vulture  
Peregrine falcon  
Tricolored heron  
Red-winged blackbird  
Common grackle  
Ruddy turnstone  
Wilson's plover  
Red Knot  
Yellow-crowned night heron

## **Bird Activity**

### Piping Plovers (PIPL)

On May 8<sup>th</sup> staff located the first piping plover nest of the 2014 season. As of May 15<sup>th</sup>, a total of 15 nests have been found on South Monomoy Island. Scraping was also observed on Minimoy Island, which produced one nest in 2013. Staff will continue to monitor nesting areas.

### American Oystercatchers (AMOY)

The first AMOY nest of the 2014 field season was found on May 5<sup>th</sup> on South Monomoy Island with 1 egg. A total of 1 nest on South Monomoy Island, 4 nests on North Monomoy Island, and 1 nest on Minimoy have been found, for a total of 6 nests on the Refuge. The first nest expected to hatch, will occur around June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Staff will continue to monitor nesting areas.

### Common Terns (COTE)

The first common terns of the 2014 field season were seen on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Nest boxes have been scattered throughout the colony in anticipation of the nesting season. As of this week, the colony is at a high count of ~3000 COTEs and rising. Although copulation has not been observed in the colony, staff saw scraping and is on the lookout for the first nest of the year.

### Roseate Terns (ROST)

The first ROST of the 2014 field season was observed on Minimoy Island on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Two sound systems, nesting condos and teepees were set up as of May 13<sup>th</sup> to attract roseate terns south of the main colony, as well as provide cover for ROSTs nesting in the main colony. The first step of the Refuge's Roseate habitat restoration project was initiated on May 6<sup>th</sup>, and is discussed in detail on Pg. 3.

### Black Skimmers (BLSK)

No new information to report. BLSK have not been sighted on the refuge.

### Least Terns (LETE)

Least terns were spotted feeding on the refuge at Powder Hole on May 8<sup>th</sup> this year. Staff will continue to monitor areas with past LETS nesting.

## **Roseate habitat restoration Project**

This year, Monomoy NWR will be taking an active role in creating more suitable nesting habitat for the endangered roseate tern. Our hope is this project will aid their recovery and encourage nesting on the refuge. Funding used for this vital project came from the

Cooperative Recovery Initiative from the USFWS for roseate terns.

So far, 725 seaside goldenrods have been planted in 3 separate study areas and 1 test plot, two of which are south of the main colony in historical nesting sites for ROST. Staff has taken 9 photoplots to monitor how the plants will grow throughout the season. These photos will provide insight on where to plant the 1200 golderod plants coming in the fall.

More information on this project will follow as necessary.

## **Wading Bird Census**

Our wading bird colony was censused on North Monomoy Island on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Refuge staff located Black crowned night-heron, Snowy egret, and Great egret nests. Preliminary numbers indicate 232 nests were found, an increase of 4 nests from 2013! More results will be published in the following weekly update.

## **iPlover**

The Refuge is cooperating with the NPS and USGS as a beta test site for an exciting new app: iPlover. With this app, important nest site data is collected, and used to determine how plover nest site selection relates to rising sea levels and climate change.

More information will follow in the next weekly update.

## **Salt Marsh Integrity**

Lastly, the Refuge is excited to join 9 other NWR's in a region-wide effort to implement the Salt Marsh Integrity monitoring project.

A combination of habitat assessments including bird surveys, fish/crustacean, vegetation, hydrology and surface elevation, will shed light on the condition of Monomoy's salt marshes. These assessments will guide future Refuge management actions, while also increasing marsh resiliency and reducing vulnerability to sea level rise and increased coastal storm frequency brought about by climate change.

## Current & Upcoming Events

<b>Annual staff orientation meeting</b>	<b>May 12</b>
<b>Wading Bird Census</b>	<b>May 16</b>
<b>AMOY Census Window</b>	<b>May 22-31</b>
<b>Horseshoe Crab Resighting Surveys</b>	<b>May 26-30</b>
<b>Horseshoe Crab Tagging</b>	<b>May 30</b>

MAY 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31